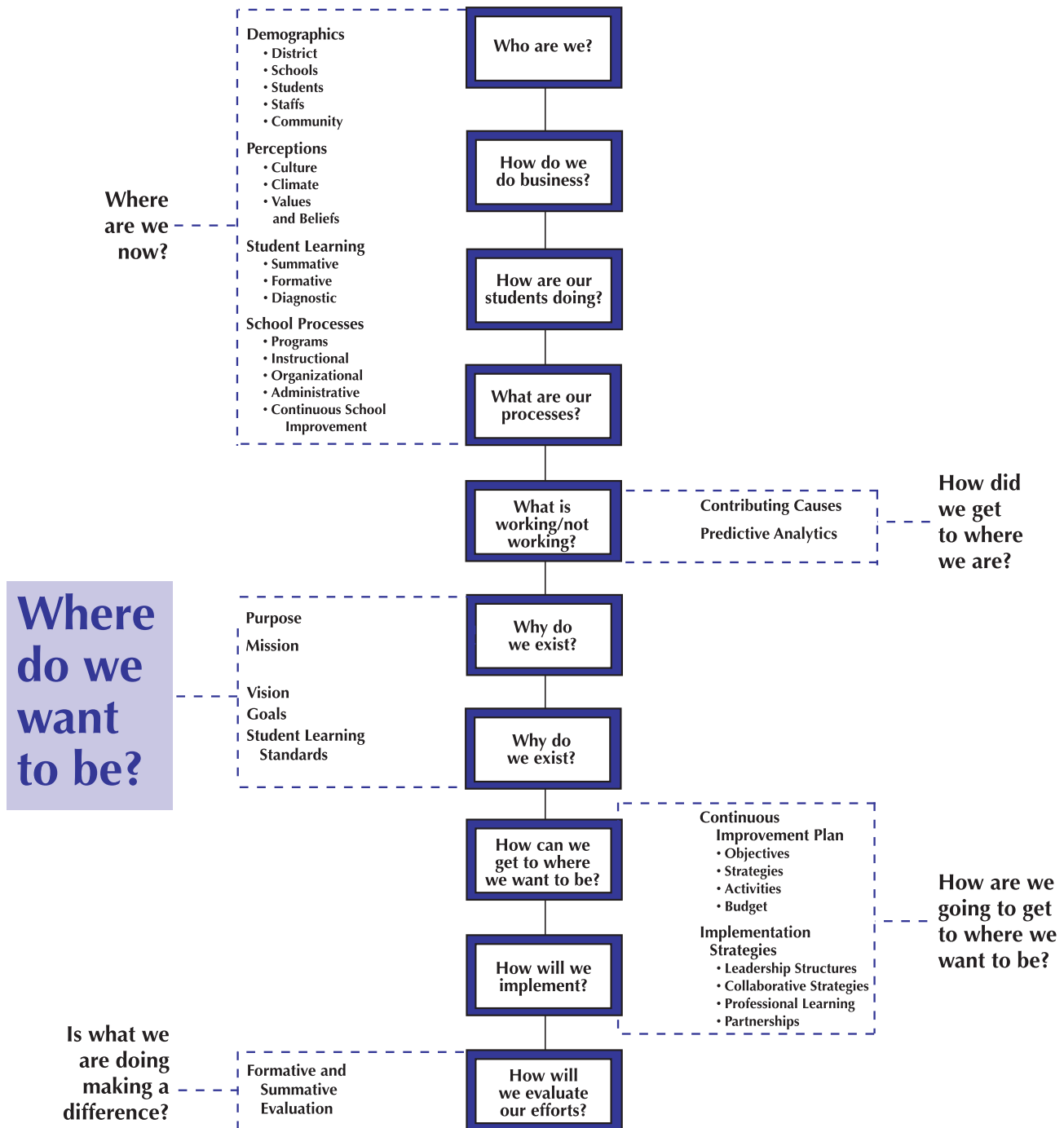


WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE: CREATING A SHARED VISION AND MONITORING ITS IMPLEMENTATION



*Shared visions emerge from personal visions.
This is how they derive their energy and how they foster
commitment. . . . If people don't have their own vision,
all they can do is 'sign up' for someone else's.
The result is compliance, never commitment.*

Peter Senge
Author, *The Fifth Discipline*

Staff need to study and discuss the implications of teaching the current and future student populations, and the changes needed in the school's curriculum, instruction, assessment, and environmental approaches to implement best practices, and then create a vision for where they want to go.

If a school does not have a clear, shared vision, it has as many visions as it has people.

After analyzing the school data profile, clarifying where the learning organization is right now, and learning what is and is not working and why, it is important to study different approaches to improving results. Staff need to study and discuss the implications of teaching the current and future student populations, and the changes needed in the school's curriculum, instruction, assessment, and environmental approaches to implement best practices, and then create a vision for where they want to go. With new knowledge, a staff can implement new thinking and new strategies—as opposed to signing up for the same thing and getting the same results, or adding interventions and programs to “solve” each problem.

WHY THE SHARED VISION IS IMPORTANT FOR CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

If a school does not have a clear, shared vision, it has as many visions as it has people. Consequently, the most the school could ever hope for are random acts of improvement. Figure 9.1 shows that *Random Acts of Improvement* result when there is no specific target. A vision which is based on guiding principles, is shared, and to which all staff are committed is the key to getting *Focused Acts of Improvement* (Figure 9.2).

Figure 9.1
RANDOM ACTS OF IMPROVEMENT

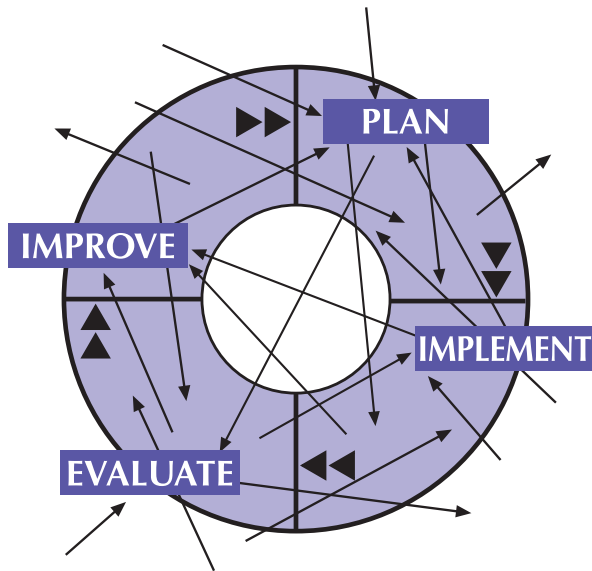
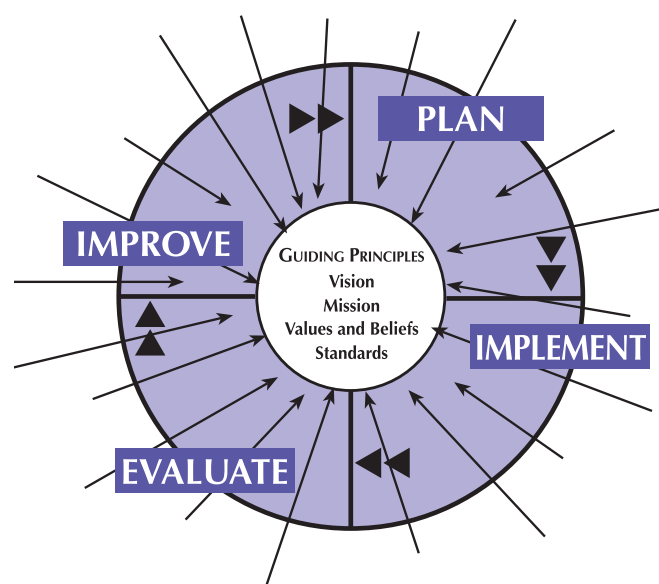


Figure 9.2
FOCUSED ACTS OF IMPROVEMENT



A school defines its future through its mission, vision, goals, and student expectations. The school's vision, goals, and student expectations must reflect the core values and beliefs of the staff, merged from personal values and beliefs. This level of reflection is paramount. If educators are not cognizant of what they value and believe about being educators, and do not come together on these beliefs, it is impossible to create a shared vision/mission. Creating a vision from core values and beliefs ensures a vision to which all staff members can commit. Without a vision to which all staff members commit, a school's collective efforts have no target.

To create a school vision that is truly shared, we must begin with the personal and move to the collective. To create a school vision that is committed to unanimously and understood in the same way—we must build on the values and beliefs of the school staff to create core values and beliefs, a core purpose, and a mission for the school. With core values and beliefs, purpose and mission established, a vision for the school can be created.

The school's vision, goals, and student expectations must reflect the core values and beliefs of the staff, merged from personal values and beliefs.

With core values and beliefs, purpose and mission established, a vision for the school can be created.

INSPIRING A SHARED VISION

Effective visions have the following characteristics. Effective visions are:

- ◆ based on comprehensive data analysis that show how the school is getting its current results for its students;
- ◆ grounded in research on best practices that show staff how they might get different results with different processes;

Effective visions are:

- *based on comprehensive data analysis;*
- *grounded in research on best practices;*
- *created from shared personal values and beliefs;*
- *reflective of core values and beliefs;*
- *organized on what teachers do;*
- *specific, detailed, and clear; and*
- *supported by structures to implement the vision.*

- ◆ created from shared personal values and beliefs about the factors that impact learning for the school's students;
- ◆ reflective of core values and beliefs that can be transported into action;
- ◆ organized on what teachers do, such as implement curriculum, instructional and assessment strategies, and create learning environments that encourage learning by all students;
- ◆ specific, detailed, and clear so everyone can understand them and implement them in the same way; and they are
- ◆ supported by structures that ensure that everyone understands that her/his job is to implement the vision.

A vision, which is clear and detailed, based on core values and beliefs and best practice research, with support structures gets implemented.

A vision, which is clear and detailed, based on core values and beliefs and best practice research, with support structures gets implemented. Many schools think of vision as a paper exercise that results in a statement. In over two decades of working with schools on continuous school improvement, I have never seen a vision *statement* get implemented. While schools and districts may develop a vision *statement* to post in public areas, to use on stationery and other publications, a vision statement is simply too narrow to drive continuous school improvement. It is impossible for everyone on staff to understand and implement a statement in the same way unless the details have been agreed to and spelled out.

An example follows that leads us through the creation of a shared vision that will get implemented. (The process for *Creating a Shared Vision* is in Appendix J.)

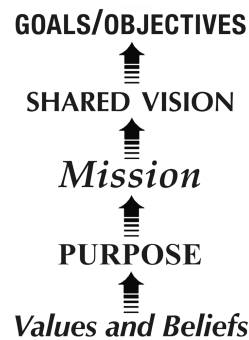
HOW TO CREATE A SHARED VISION

The steps in creating a shared mission and vision are illustrated using Somewhere School, a school committed to having all staff implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Step 1. Review comprehensive data and read Best Practices. Prior to the visioning work, staff members reviewed their comprehensive school data analysis, problem-solving cycle work, and read Best Practices related to areas of need and implementing the CCSS. Because they want to get better end results, they had book studies, attended workshops, worked with consultants, and shared their learnings with each other.

Step 2. Seat staff members. On the day of their visioning session, the facilitator placed staff members, mixed by subject area and grade level, at tables of six. The ground rules and the agenda for the day were reviewed.

- Step 3. Review the big picture of creating a shared vision.** Staff learned that a shared vision is based on a system of fundamental motivating assumptions, and principles.



- Step 4. Create individual values and beliefs.** The first order of business was to create a solid foundation with core values and beliefs—the shaping forces behind the shared vision. Each staff member jotted down the first ideas that came to her/him, with respect to—

What are the curriculum, instruction, assessment, and environmental factors that support effective learning for our students?

- Step 5. Merge individual thinking into small groups.** Staff members at each table merged their thinking about these factors, and wrote their ideas on chart papers that were posted on the wall.
- Step 6. Merge small group thinking to whole group.** The small group values and beliefs were merged into core values and beliefs for the staff, shown in Figure 9.3. In less than one hour, staff members created an outstanding foundation for their shared vision.
- Step 7. Agree on purpose of school.** To get to mission, an exercise that many staff members were worried about because of the terrible time they had word smithing the last mission statement, they started with purpose.

*What is the purpose of our Somewhere School?
Why does our Somewhere School exist?*

It was quickly agreed that the purpose of Somewhere High School is:

To educate all students so that they may achieve their dreams and better the world.

HOW TO CREATE A SHARED VISION

- Step 1.** Review comprehensive data and read Best Practices.
- Step 2.** Seat staff members.
- Step 3.** Review the big picture of creating a shared vision.
- Step 4.** Create individual values and beliefs.
- Step 5.** Merge individual thinking into small groups.
- Step 6.** Merge small group thinking to whole group.
- Step 7.** Agree on purpose of school.
- Step 8.** Develop mission statement.
- Step 9.** Record independent thoughts about vision.
- Step 10.** Merge individual thoughts to small group.
- Step 11.** Merge small group thinking into large group.
- Step 12.** Determine school goals.
- Step 13.** Staff reflections.

Figure 9.3
SOMEWHERE SCHOOL CORE VALUES AND BELIEFS

CURRICULUM <i>What we teach.</i>	INSTRUCTION <i>How we teach the curriculum.</i>	ASSESSMENT <i>How we assess learning.</i>	ENVIRONMENT <i>How each person treats every other person.</i>
<p>Curriculum should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible and aligned to evidence-based instructional strategies and assessments. • Dynamic, rigorous, and coherent, aligned to the knowledge and skills required to be productive citizens and workers in the 21st Century. • Designed to develop literacy across content areas. • Technology supportive (e.g., computer adaptive and accessible). • Evidence-based, vertically and horizontally aligned, and based on learning progressions. • Collaboratively agreed upon in Communities of Professional Practice and supported by <i>all</i> teachers in the school. • At the core of a Continuous School Improvement Model and served by an effective RtI system designed to promote student success and prevent school failure, ensuring that <i>all</i> students attain or exceed the pre-set performance standards. • Designed to motivate critical thinking, creativity, and innovation. 	<p>Instruction should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned to curriculum and assessment as part of a coherent <i>learning system</i> that is responsive to all learners and makes sense to students. • Grade level <i>accessible</i> and available to <i>all</i> students. • Engaging to students, providing them with <i>authentic</i> work that prepares them for citizenship, college, and careers in the 21st Century. • Helpful to students to make cross-curricular connections, providing students with opportunities to demonstrate their <i>literacy</i> across content areas. • Technology supportive (e.g., computer adaptive, accessible by variety of technologies, employing Universal Design principles, etc.). • Differentiated to address the needs of <i>all</i> students so that grade-level instruction is accessible to everyone. • Enacted, matching the content and intent of the written curriculum. • At the core of the Continuous School Improvement Model and at the center of the RtI system, designed to promote success and prevent school failure, ensuring that <i>all</i> students attain, or exceed, the pre-set performance standards. • Collaboratively developed, implemented, evaluated, and continually revised for improvement. • Motivating, encouraging students to think, create, and innovate. 	<p>Assessment should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-faceted, employing diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments. • Used for the purposes of the assessment design, and <i>multiple criteria</i> always used to make critical decisions regarding student's lives (e.g., graduation, promotion to next grade, etc.). • Aligned to the school's curriculum, instruction, and student learning resources. • Designed to assess cross-curricular standards-<i>literacy</i> across content areas. • Accessible via technology and developed using the principals of <i>Universal Design¹</i>, particularly for summative assessments. • Designed to provide qualitative, as well as quantitative information to students and the school's instructional staff, as well as to parents and community. • Primarily formative and <i>lesson-embedded</i>, providing teachers with data to inform instructional modifications and re-teaching, and to provide students with useful information to improve their work. • Designed to provide the kind of data that will help school staff answer the questions: <i>How well are the Continuous School Improvement and RtI systems serving our students? What is working? What isn't working?</i> 	<p>The school environment should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a safe and nurturing environment for learning and encourage creativity and innovation. • Focus on <i>learning</i>, rather than delivering instruction. • Provide appropriate technology to support 21st Century learning. • Develop students who respect diversity (e.g., ideas, people, cultures). • Provide a highly-effective Response to Intervention (RtI) Model that provides <i>timely</i> assistance to <i>all</i> students so that <i>all</i> students succeed. • Develop the <i>whole</i> child. • Listen to and provide assistance to parents, bringing them into the life of the school and their children's learning. • Be truthful and clear about where a student is academically and socially and what the student needs in order to be ready for citizenship, college, and career in the 21st Century. • Be a place where students want to come each day—a place where they gain respect for themselves and others because they are successful learners in all respects: academically, as citizens, and as members of a community.

¹ "Universally designed assessments are designed and developed to allow participation of the widest possible range of students, in a way that results in valid inferences about performance on grade-level standards for all students who participate in the assessment." -Thurlow and Malouf, *Creating Better Tests for Everyone Through Universally Designed Assessments*. Retrieved from: <http://www.testpublishers.org/assets/documents/volume%206%20issue%201%20Creating%20a%20better%20tests.pdf>

Example provided by Cheryl Z. Tibbals, Consultant, cztibbalsconsulting@gmail.com

Step 8. Develop mission statement. After a healthy debate, a teacher synthesized what colleagues were saying they liked, and recommended wording for the mission statement, which was accepted wholeheartedly:

*To provide all students with the knowledge
and tools they will need to be successful
citizens and workers in the 21st Century.*

If staff members had not quickly agreed to the mission, they would have delegated its writing to the English teachers to develop a draft, so the visioning work could continue. They already agreed on core values and beliefs and purpose.

Step 9. Record independent thoughts about vision. While staff members were agreeing on purpose and mission statements, the facilitator had the core values and beliefs typed and copied for each staff member to use to inform thinking about a school vision. The task of staff was to jot down what each thought the school would look like, sound like, and feel like when the mission is implemented, with our core values and beliefs, in terms of—

*Curriculum, what we teach;
Instruction, how we teach the curriculum;
Assessment, how we assess learning;
and Learning Environment, how each
person treats every other person.*

Step 10. Merge individual thoughts to small group. One more time, staff members merged their individual thinking with their small group teammates.

Step 11. Merge small group thinking into large group. The consensus was that the core values and beliefs were excellent and should be elaborated for their shared vision. (The Leadership Team refined the language after the visioning day, shown in Figure 9.4.)

Step 12. Determine school goals. Goals are the outcomes of the vision. Given the staff's core values and beliefs, mission, and vision, the following goals represent what staff believe will result from vision.

*Ensure that ALL students graduate from high school,
college and career ready for citizenship
and success in the 21st Century workplace.*

Figure 9.4
SOMEWHERE SCHOOL VISION

CURRICULUM <i>What we teach.</i>	INSTRUCTION <i>How we teach the curriculum.</i>	ASSESSMENT <i>How we assess learning.</i>	ENVIRONMENT <i>How each person treats every other person.</i>
The curriculum is a living document that represents what will be important to know and be able to do in the future. It provides a <i>learning roadmap</i> that guides teachers in <i>what</i> they will teach and students in <i>what</i> they will learn. It paves a way through the fields of content knowledge that is direct, efficient, rich, and deep while, at the same time, connecting one disciplinary path to another so the learner arrives at high school graduation a <i>literate</i> citizen across content areas, ready to take on the 21 st Century.	Instruction is truly <i>student-centered</i> . Students are <i>engaged</i> in <i>authentic</i> , meaningful, rigorous, deep work where they must consistently analyze, synthesize, evaluate, develop, build, and create. They work on learning tasks individually and in teams, with the continual assistance of teachers who are effective at guiding student learning as coach and facilitator, as well as instructor. All students in the district are met <i>where they are</i> and are taken to <i>where they need to be</i> . Students have at their disposal the instructional resources, including technology, that they need to develop the knowledge and skills required to graduate from high school-prepared for success in college and career. Teachers collaboratively develop and deliver lessons that transform the curriculum into a learning landscape that encourages students to <i>think outside the box</i> , to take the knowledge and skills they have learned to the next dimension, to invent the next dynamic technology, to develop the needed vaccines, to put, as Steve Jobs wanted to do, that “ding in the universe.”	Assessment is used as a tool, not a bludgeon. Assessment is a vital part of Continuous School Improvement, providing the information needed to identify where the school is performing well, where its performance needs improvement, and where there are major problems that must be addressed immediately. Assessment is conducted in a variety of ways and via a variety of approaches (e.g., technology) that meet the needs of each student. Diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments provide a constant flow of data that informs instruction. <i>Formative</i> assessment is embedded in every lesson. The results are used by teachers to provide <i>just-in-time</i> corrections and re-teaching, to identify students in need of secondary or tertiary RtI, and to inform revisions in instructional materials, as well as the CSI and RtI systems. Students use the results of formative assessment (e.g., teacher, peer, or self-evaluation) to improve their work, and to develop metacognitive skills and the habits of mind that enable them to master standards in elementary and secondary school, preparing them for citizenship and success in college and career in the 21 st Century. Using multiple assessment types enables the school staff to develop a clearer picture of how effective the CSI and RtI systems are. The <i>focus on formative</i> assessment is to provide the staff and students with the powerful tool that revolutionizes classroom instruction and <i>learning</i> , resulting in consistent, statistically significant, across-the-board yearly improvement in mastery of the CCSS.	All students enjoy school every day because they are learning skills and knowledge for which they see a connection to their present and future lives. Engaged in their own learning, working closely with teachers who guide and nurture their intellectual and emotional development, students have learned the importance and personal satisfaction that grows out of mutual respect for others—teachers, parents, and peers. They value collaboration, teamwork, innovation, and persistence because they have experienced it in an environment where not succeeding at first, does not mean failure but, instead, an opportunity to learn and a step closer to ultimate success. These real-life scenarios prepare these students for citizenship and work in the 21 st Century. Schools become the “hubs” of their communities, as parents and community members participate in a partnership with their school staffs, galvanizing what might once have been disparate groups into a unified effort to see that truly no child leaves school unprepared for a successful and productive life.

Example provided by Cheryl Z. Tibbals, Consultant, cztibbalsconsulting@gmail.com

Staff will:

- ◆ provide a learning environment that develops life-long learners.
- ◆ build a collaborative professional community that values and strives for continuous organizational improvement.
- ◆ provide resources that support work typical of the 21st Century workplace (e.g., technology).
- ◆ help all parents support their students for success.
- ◆ develop an insatiable hunger for self-improvement among staff, students, and community.
- ◆ bring the community into the life of the school and the school into the life of the community.
- ◆ provide a physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe environment that encourages students to become creators and innovators that improve the world.

Step 13. Staff reflections. Our final job of the day was to reflect on two questions, shown below with our merged responses. We can see how this work, along with the data analysis work, leads us directly into our continuous school improvement plan.

What will it look like, sound like, and feel like when the vision is implemented?

Staff reflections:

- ◆ Every student will be on track for high school graduation and will be prepared for citizenship, college, and career in the 21st Century workplace.
- ◆ Students will be inquisitive and accustomed to using critical thinking skills and technology in their daily work.
- ◆ Classroom observations will reveal students engaged in deep and authentic tasks (constructivism) with teachers serving as facilitators who are continually collecting formative assessment data that enable them to provide the just-in-time instructional adjustments and re-teaching (direct instruction) required to ensure success and prevent school failure.
- ◆ Students are found in after-school programs that build on what they learned in class, offer assistance with homework, and provide extended resources (e.g., computers).
- ◆ Student attendance is very high, tardies very low, and drop-outs nonexistent.

- ◆ In faculty meetings and in the school's Communities of Professional Practice sessions, teachers and leaders, like their students, are engaged in deep work, analyzing standards, developing an aligned curriculum/instruction/assessment system that is focused, coherent, and explainable to parents and community.
- ◆ Teachers and leaders work collaboratively to build a school environment that is inviting and dynamic—a fun place to work and learn for students and staff.
- ◆ Parents and community members participate monthly in classroom sessions where teachers explain what their students will be learning in the next month and why.
- ◆ In the teachers' workroom, teachers talk excitedly about successes in their classrooms that morning, ask others for advice, share information and strategies, and offer help to each other.
- ◆ Student assessment results reflect an effective instructional program implemented with fidelity. No teacher or leader wants to leave this school.

*What do your learning organization
and/or classroom need in order to
fully implement the shared vision?*

Some of the things the organization would need to implement the shared vision include the following:

- ◆ Time to establish a Community of Professional Practice for collaborative work in the following areas:
 - * to dig deeper into school data to determine what is working and not working and for whom, as well as to determine what data are still needed as the school moves into CCSS implementation;
 - * to conduct Standards Studies across the school;
 - * to institute grade-level Lesson Study;
 - * to research and establish an evidence-based research data base for professional learning; and
 - * to re-examine the school's Continuous School Improvement and RtI System in light of implementing the CCSS.

- ◆ Funds for the following:
 - * bring in outside experts/assistance to challenge our thinking;
 - * purchase the needed CCSS-aligned instructional resources;
 - * infuse classrooms with appropriate learning technology; and
 - * work with coaches.

Once the vision work was cleaned up, shared, and approved in the next staff meeting, a group of staff members volunteered to create a flowchart of how the parts of the vision work together so all staff can understand it in the same way. The flowchart is shown in Figure 6.3. (Also see Appendix E, *Flowcharting School Processes*.)

This same group of staff members was also tasked with determining how the vision would be monitored when the details of the vision are fleshed out. (See Appendix K for the *Monitoring Vision Implementation*.)

HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE?

With the comprehensive data analysis and the study of Best Practices complete, the actual visioning process should take under three hours, depending upon the size of staff and how much they have worked together in the past.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is a shared vision?
2. Why is a shared vision important to continuous school improvement?
3. How can your staff create a shared vision?

APPLICATION OPPORTUNITIES

1. Schedule time for your staff to create a shared vision.
2. Follow Appendix J, *Creating a Shared Vision*, to facilitate the creation of a shared vision for your school.
3. Follow Appendix E, *Flowcharting School Processes*, to facilitate the creation of a flowchart to show what the vision will look like when implemented.
4. Use Appendix K, *Monitoring Vision Implementation*, to create a tool to monitor the implementation of your vision.